

Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999

Fact Sheet

Purpose

The Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999 (PSAA) was enacted into law in April 1999. The PSAA:

- Holds schools accountable for improving students' academic performance;
- Establishes an incentive system to (1) reward schools that demonstrate academic growth or high achievement and (2) provide interventions and, ultimately, sanctions for continuously underperforming schools; and
- Encourages the active participation of parents, students, educators, and the local community in improving student achievement.

Schools are ranked according to the Academic Performance Index (API). In addition, they are expected to show improvement in students' academic achievement by meeting annual API growth targets, including growth targets for each numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup in a school. The school's API growth is considered relative to an interim statewide API performance target.

Most, but not all, schools are included in the system of API ranking and growth targets beginning in 1999. The API and annual growth targets are calculated for elementary, middle, and comprehensive high schools, including charter schools, that have 100 or more students with valid Stanford 9 test scores from the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. Schools that have fewer than 100 students with valid scores, along with alternative schools, continuation high schools, and county-administered schools, will participate in an alternative accountability system to be developed by July 1, 2000.

Components

The PSAA has three main components.

1. The Academic Performance Index (API) is used to measure school performance and to report gains or losses in school performance over time.
2. The Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP) offers support and financial resources to schools in need of improvement.
3. The Governor's Performance Award Program (GPAP) provides a reward system for schools that demonstrate improvement or high achievement.

Academic Performance Index (API)

What is the API?

The API is a numeric index (or score) between 200 to 1000 reflecting a school's performance level. It will eventually consist of a number of indicators. Initially, only the results of the Stanford 9, the nationally-normed test that is administered to all California public school students in grades 2 through 11 as part of the STAR program, will be included. Once available, other indicators will be phased in over time. Additional indicators are to include a test aligned to the state's academic standards and a high school exit examination. The API will also include other factors including graduation rates and attendance rates for students and school staff when these are available. (At present, the state does not yet have a system for accurately collecting data on graduation and attendance rates.) The law requires that test results constitute at least 60 percent of the API. To measure growth accurately over time, no indicator will be used to compute growth in the API until two years of data are available.

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Academic Performance Index (API)

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Calculation of a School's API

Calculation of the 1999 API involves a formula for combining individual student scores in each subject area on the 1999 Stanford 9 into a single number that represents the performance of a school based on pupil achievement. The national percentile rank (NPR) of the student score is used to reflect individual student achievement at a school. The percentages of students scoring within each of five NPR performance levels (called performance bands) are weighted and combined to produce a summary result for a content area. Summary results for content areas are also weighted and added together to produce a single number between 200 and 1000. This single number represents the school's API score. The minimum score on the API is 200; the maximum is 1000. Schools must have valid Stanford 9 test scores from at least 100 students to obtain an API score.

API Scores and Ranks

Schools receiving an API score between 200 and 1000 will also be ranked in ten categories of equal size (deciles) from one (lowest) to ten (highest). A school's API score and ranking will be calculated compared to schools statewide as well as compared to schools with similar demographic characteristics. A school will also receive an API score for each numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup in the school.

Calculation of a School's Growth Target

The 1999 API score is used in conjunction with the interim statewide API performance target to determine the growth target for a school. A school's growth target is the amount of improvement a school is expected to make in its API score in a year.

Interim Statewide API Performance Target. The PSAA requires that, upon adoption of state performance standards by the State Board of Education (SBE), a statewide API performance target be adopted. Schools may then either meet the statewide performance target or their annual growth targets to be eligible for awards. Because state performance standards have not yet been adopted, the SBE adopted an interim statewide API performance target for 1999 of 800. This target defines a high level of performance on the Stanford 9 to which all schools in California should aspire. This interim target will serve as the statewide performance target until the SBE adopts state performance standards. At that point, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) will recommend and the State Board will adopt a permanent statewide API performance target as required by law.

School Growth Target. The annual growth target for a school corresponds to five percent of the distance between a school's API and the interim statewide API performance target of 800. A school with a 1999 API of 500, for instance, would have a goal of 515 on the 2000 API, or a growth target of five percent of the distance between 500 and 800. A school with a 1999 API of 800 or more must maintain an API of at least 800 in order to meet its growth target. For any school below an API of 800, the minimum annual growth target is at least one point.

Generally, if a school meets or exceeds its growth target it may be eligible to receive an award through the Governor's Performance Award Program (GPAP); if the school does not, it may be eligible for interventions through the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP).

Schools will receive a school growth target as well as a growth target for each numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup.

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Academic Performance Index (API)

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Comparable Improvement: Subgroup Growth Targets

In order for a school to be eligible for awards through the GPAP, it must not only meet or exceed its school growth target but also reflect comparable improvement in academic achievement by all numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups. With a few minor exceptions, each numerically significant subgroup must meet or exceed 80% of the school's growth target for the school to meet the comparable improvement criterion. *All* numerically significant subgroups must achieve for a school to be deemed successful and receive an award.

Reporting API Results

In January 2000, 1999 API reports will be distributed to local education agencies. School districts and county offices of education will receive for each school:

- 1999 API score and rank
 - School score
 - School rank compared to schools statewide
 - School rank compared to schools with similar characteristics
 - Score for each numerically significant subgroup
- 1999-2000 growth target
 - School growth target
 - Growth target for each numerically significant subgroup
- 2000 API target (i.e., 1999 API score plus 1999-2000 growth target)
 - School API target
 - API target for each numerically significant subgroup
- Related background data on school demographic characteristics

In the fall of 2000, school districts and county offices of education will receive 2000 API reports covering the same type of information as in the 1999 API reports except that the data will be from 2000. In addition, they will also receive information on growth from 1999 to 2000 for each school:

- 1999-2000 growth and rank
 - School growth
 - School growth rank compared to schools statewide
 - School growth rank compared to schools with similar characteristics
 - Growth for each numerically significant subgroup
 - Information on whether growth targets were met

API scores are on a scale of 200 to 1000; ranks are on a scale of 1 to 10.

Public reporting of the API results will be posted on the California Department of Education (CDE) PSAA web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa> and will include all of the above with the exception of certain detailed school and subgroup data.

API Reporting Required by Schools

By law, schools must annually report their API ranking in their local School Accountability Report Cards starting in July 2000. Each school district's governing board must discuss these results at a regularly scheduled meeting.

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Immediate Interventions/ Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP)

What is the II/USP?

In 1999-2000, \$96 million is available to support an initial group of 430 schools that volunteered and were selected for the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP). This program provides resources for underperforming schools to support development and implementation of school action plans aimed at increasing student achievement. For the 1999-2000 school year, schools scoring in the lower half of the statewide distribution on the STAR test for both 1998 and 1999 were invited to participate in the II/USP. Commencing in the fall of 2000, schools which fail to meet growth targets may volunteer or may be selected to participate in the II/USP, subject to funding.

1999-2000 II/USP Participants

In the fall of 1999, 353 II/USP schools received planning grants of \$50,000 each to develop school action plans. These schools hired external evaluators to coordinate the plans' development. After the action plans are approved by local governing boards, reviewed by the CDE, and approved by the SBE, participating schools receive additional funding to implement the plans in the subsequent year (i.e., 2000-2001). The implementation grants for these schools will be a minimum of \$50,000 for each school, up to approximately \$168 per pupil. An additional 77 II/USP schools were selected in the fall of 1999 and have already completed the planning process. These schools will receive federal grants of up to \$200 per pupil to implement improvement activities over the next three years.

II/USP Criteria for Growth

II/USP schools that meet or exceed their growth targets are eligible to receive GPAP awards. II/USP schools that fail to meet their growth targets after the first year of implementation are subject to local interventions. Under local interventions, the district governing board must hold a public hearing to ensure that the school community is aware of the school's lack of progress. The governing board must then intervene in the school to help it meet its growth target. II/USP schools failing to meet their growth targets but showing significant growth after two years of implementation may continue in the II/USP program for another year.

II/USP schools that fail to meet their growth targets *and* fail to show significant growth after two years of implementation are subject to state sanctions. Under state sanctions, the SSPI shall "assume all the legal rights, duties, and powers of the governing board with respect to that school....[and], in consultation with the SBE and the governing board of the school district, shall reassign the principal of that school subject to findings..." [Section 52055.5(c) of PSAA] The SSPI, in consultation with the SBE, must take at least *one* of the following actions:

- Allow students to attend any public school with available space;
- Allow parents to apply to the SBE to establish a charter school;
- Assign the management of the school to a college, university, county office of education, or other appropriate educational institution;
- Reassign other certificated employees of the school;
- Renegotiate a new collective bargaining agreement when the existing agreement expires;
- Reorganize the school; or
- Close the school.

In addition, the SSPI, in consultation with the SBE, may take any other action considered necessary against the school district or its governing board, including appointing a new superintendent or taking away the governing board's authority over the school.

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Governor's Performance Award Program (GPAP)

What is the GPAP?

In 1999-2000, \$96 million is available for the Governor's Performance Award Program (GPAP). The GPAP will provide monetary and nonmonetary awards for schools that meet or exceed their API growth target or the interim statewide API performance target and demonstrate comparable improvement in academic achievement by all numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups.

Types of Awards

Commencing in the fall 2000, GPAP awards will be distributed to eligible schools. Schools receiving these awards may receive up to \$150 per student. In addition to or in lieu of monetary awards, the SSPI may also establish nonmonetary awards that could include classifying a school as a distinguished school, listing a school on a public schools honor roll, and commending a school. Schools that are eligible for the GPAP may also request a waiver of certain *Education Code* requirements, and those demonstrating significant growth will receive maximum flexibility in the expenditure of certain funds.

Certificated Staff Performance Incentives (Assembly Bill 1114)

AB 1114 (Chapter 52 of 1999) was passed and approved in June 1999. It provides \$50 million for one-time performance bonuses to teachers and other certificated staff in underachieving schools. The maximum amount allocated to a school will be up to \$25,000 per full-time equivalent certificated staff. For purposes of the law, an "underachieving school" is defined as any school with an API that places it below the 50th percentile relative to other public schools statewide in the year prior to the award. Performance bonuses will go to certificated staff in any of these schools that significantly improve beyond the five-percent annual growth target in the API. Any school district with schools that meet the eligibility criteria may apply for funding under this Act. Charter schools that meet the criteria may also apply. County boards, county superintendents of schools, and state agencies are not eligible to participate.

Allocation of Awards

The SBE, at its December 1999 meeting, approved the plan for developing AB 1114 criteria. A PSAA subcommittee on awards will begin convening in January 2000 to identify and develop recommendations for implementing both GPAP and AB 1114. These recommendations will be provided to the SBE for adoption in the spring of 2000, and funds are anticipated to be allocated in the fall of 2000.

Parent and community involvement

The legislative intent of the PSAA is that school accountability systems encourage the active involvement of parents, guardians, and community members to achieve better pupil performance. For schools in II/USP, parent notification and involvement are required in developing the action plan for school improvement. Parents and the community can help their schools by promoting good student study habits, volunteering in school activities, and assisting in school decision making to improve student learning.

For more information...

Questions about the 1999 API and GPAP should be directed to the Office of Policy and Evaluation of the California Department of Education (CDE) at (916) 657-2273 (phone), (916) 657-5201 (fax), or psaa@cde.ca.gov (email). Questions about the II/USP should be directed to the School Reform Assistance Office of the CDE at (916) 657-3803 (phone) or (916) 657-3011 (fax). Additional information can be obtained at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa> on the CDE web site.

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Timeline

April 1999	Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999 (PSAA) legislation (Chapter 3 of 1999) enacted
July 1999	<i>Framework for the Academic Performance Index (API)</i> approved by the State Board of Education
August 1999	Schools scoring in the lower half of the statewide distribution on the norm-referenced portion of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program test for both 1998 and 1999 invited to participate in the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP)
September 1999 and each Fall thereafter	Eligible schools selected for II/USP
November 1999	<i>The 1999 Base Year Academic Performance Index (API)</i> approved by the State Board of Education
January 2000 and each Fall thereafter	API scores, rankings, and growth targets established and disseminated to schools
July 2000	Alternative accountability system established for small schools, alternative schools, continuation high schools, and county-administered schools
July 2000 and annually thereafter	Schools annually report API rankings on local School Accountability Report Cards
Fall 2000 and each Fall thereafter	Schools' past year achieved growth reported and schools not in II/USP that fail to meet growth targets may be subject to II/USP; schools meeting growth target or the interim statewide performance target and demonstrating comparable improvement for numerically significant subgroups receive awards from the Governor's Performance Award Program (GPAP) and/or AB 1114 (Chapter 52 of 1999)
Fall 2001	II/USP schools failing to meet growth targets receive public hearing, and local governing board chooses type of local intervention
Fall 2002	II/USP schools failing to meet growth targets but showing significant growth continue in II/USP
Fall 2002	II/USP schools failing to meet growth targets <i>and</i> failing to show significant growth fall under the sanctions of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and State Board of Education